

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Twenty-second meeting of the Plants Committee
Tbilisi (Georgia), 19-23 October 2015

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Trees and proposals for possible consideration at CoP17

INFORMATION ON MOST-TRADED ROSEWOOD SPECIES –
PTEROCARPUS MACROCARPUS AND *DALBERGIA OLIVERI*

This information document has been submitted by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) in relation to agenda items 17.6 and 22.3.¹

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Briefing for the Twenty-second meeting of the Plants Committee

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Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention:

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Information on Most-Traded Rosewood Species - *Pterocarpus macrocarpus* (Paduak) and *Dalbergia oliveri* (Tamalan)

1. This document has been submitted by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA UK).

Background

2. EIA notes and welcomes the wide range of documents submitted by Parties to the 22nd Plants Committee that address threats to a geographically diverse range of “rosewood”, “redwood” or “Hongmu” timber species. (PC22 Docs: 17.2; 17.3.1; 17.3.2; 17.6; 22.3 and 22.4.) The surge in demand for such rare, high-value timber species is a global conservation issue requiring an effective response.
3. Many of these documents identify issues relating to taxonomy, identification difficulties, the role of look-alike species, and limited trade data for threat assessments, that might complicate the effective application of CITES to most-threatened species. For example, PC22 22.4 seeks the Secretariat’s guidance on the appropriateness of listing non-neotropical *Dalbergia* species, in accordance with Article II, para. 2b. of the Convention, while PC22 17.6 reports identification difficulties alongside the look-alike properties of widely traded *Dalbergia* and *Pterocarpus* species. Considering this, EIA is minded to alert the Parties to two intensively traded non-listed Asian timber species known to underpin a significant proportion of Hongmu imports into the ultimate consumer markets, namely *Pterocarpus macrocarpus* and *Dalbergia Oliveri*. Both are traded mainly as replacement look-alikes for CITES listed *Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, but have similarities with other species in other regions.

4. This document seeks to notify Parties that, as with *P.erinaceus* – another core Hongmu species under severe threat from trade (PC22 Doc. 17.1), *Pterocarpus macrocarpus* and *Dalbergia Oliveri* range states are actively considering developing listing proposals in time for COP17.
5. This follows discussions on the two species at the Regional Dialogue on Siamese Rosewood and illegal logging (Bangkok, Dec. 2014), at the 11th meeting of the Association of the South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Experts Group on CITES (AEG on CITES) in Brunei (May 2015), and at the Myanmar-China Timber Trade Stakeholder Consultation Workshop in Nay Pyi Taw (September 2015), which have focused minds on the threats posed and on how these species fulfill the criteria for CITES Appendix II listings.

Dalbergia oliveri

6. Distribution, Synonyms & Common Names: Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. *D.bariensis* is the most commonly used synonym. Common names include Tamalan and Burmese Rosewood.
7. Population status and trends: The most comprehensive population data concerns Myanmar, a primary range state, where 1.6 million cubic meters were estimated to exist in natural forests in 2011. *D.oliveri* is classified as Endangered A1cd ver.2.3 in the IUCN *Red List of Threatened Species*. Habitats suitable for *D.oliveri* have and continue to experience high rates of deforestation and forest degradation. Coupled with a low germination, a slow rate of growth and extensive harvesting, populations of *D.oliveri* are in suspected significant decline across their range.
8. Threats from Trade: Significant trade is a threat to this species' survival in the wild. In 2014, approximately 36% (equivalent to 130,00m³) of China's timber imports from Myanmar were *D.oliveri*. Continued trade at this level will deplete Myanmar's standing stocks completely in nine years (i.e. by 2024). Laos, another core range state, exported roughly 88,000 m³ to China in 2014 (20% of 441,035m³ of Hongmu log imports (HS44039930) that year). A further 11,589 m³ of *D.oliveri* logs from Cambodia are thought to have been imported into China in 2014 (20% of HS44039930). All three of these countries have log export bans in place, yet 2014 saw imports of 229,796 m³ of *D.oliveri* logs from them. *D.oliveri* is likely the third most-traded Hongmu species worldwide, after *P.macrocarpus* and *P.erinaceus*.

Pterocarpus macrocarpus

9. Distribution, Synonyms & Common Names: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Twenty-one synonyms recognised, of which *P.pedatus*, is the most commonly used. Common names include Burmese Padauk, Padauk.
10. Population status and trends: In a suspected global decline, and was included in the WCMC panel of experts' list of "priorities for action" on timber tree species in international trade of conservation concern in 2007.

Habitats suitable for *P.macrocarpus* have and continue to experience high rates of deforestation and degradation. The most comprehensive population data concerns Myanmar, a primary range state, where 1.4 million cubic meters were estimated to exist in natural forests in 2011. As a formally recognised Hongmu species *P.macrocarpus* is being systematically harvested across its natural range.

11. Threats from Trade: In 2014, approximately 54% (equivalent to 216,000m³) of all of China's timber imports from Myanmar were *P.macrocarpus*. Continued trade at this level will deplete Myanmar's standing stocks completely in three years (i.e. by 2018). China also imported 220,517m³ from Laos in 2014 (50% of the 441,035m³ of Hongmu log imports registered), and a further 34,766 from Cambodia (60% of 57,944 of Hongmu log imports). All three countries have log export bans in place, but 2014 saw Chinese log imports of *P.macrocarpus* of 471,283 m³ from them. In 2014 Vietnam also imported 191,861 of *P.macrocarpus* logs and sawn timber from Laos, and 74,152 of sawn *P.macrocarpus* from Cambodia. Combined, just two Asian markets consumed an estimated 781,400 m³ of *P.macrocarpus* from just Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia in 2014, making it the most heavily traded Hongmu species worldwide, supplying the bulk of China's global Hongmu imports.

Closing Remarks:

12. In light of this significant trade, a large proportion of which is illegal, urgent action is required to protect *P.macrocarpus* and *D.oliveri* in their own right, but also to optimize the application of listings of similar look alike species.
13. Considering the above information, the Plants Committee and Parties to CITES are invited and encouraged to:
 - Take note of the serious threat to these two species from trade, and habitat pressures;
 - Acknowledge that both *P.macrocarpus* and *D.oliveri* meet the listing criteria for Appendix II;
 - Support any proposals from range states or other Parties to list either *D.oliveri* and *P.macrocarpus* on the CITES Appendixes at COP17.
 - Recognise that listing these species would increase the efficacy of listings of similar species, including that for *Dalbergia cochinchinensis*;
 - Seek to ensure that existing or proposed listings of similar look-alike replacement species, particularly those being considered in the *Dalbergia* genus, take these two species into account.